# DESCRIPTION AND GRADING OF THE CALIFORNIA FIRST-YEAR LAW STUDENTS' EXAMINATION

The First-Year Law Students' Examination is administered in the Los Angeles and San Francisco areas in June and October each year. The examination includes both essay and multiple-choice questions and is administered in one day. Four hours is allocated for completing the four-essay question portion of the examination and three hours for one hundred multiple-choice questions.

The subjects covered in this examination are: Contracts, Criminal Law, and Torts. An answer based upon legal theories and principles of general applicability is sufficient; detailed knowledge of California law is not required. The following provisions of the Uniform Commercial Code should be used where pertinent:

- a. All of Article I;
- b. All of Article 2.

All law students who have successfully completed one year of law study are eligible to apply for the First-Year Law Students' Examination.

# Persons Required to Take the First-Year Law Students' Examination

Rule VIII, Section 1(b) of the *Rules Regulating Admission to Practice Law in California* (*Rules*) states:

An applicant who is required to take the First-Year Law Students' Examination shall not receive credit for any law study until the applicant has passed the examination. An applicant who passes the examination within three consecutive administrations of first becoming eligible to take the examination upon completion of one year of law study, shall receive credit for all law study completed to the date of the administration of the examination passed. An applicant who does not pass the examination within three consecutive administrations of first becoming eligible to take the examination but who subsequently passes the examination shall receive credit for his or her first year of law study only.

# **Exemption from the First-Year Law Students' Examination**

Rule VIII, Section 1(a) of the Rules states:

Every person who intends to seek admission as a general applicant shall take the First-Year Law Students' Examination following completion of one year of law study unless such person:

- (1) Has passed the bar examination of a United States jurisdiction, a possession, territory, or dependency the United States may hereafter acquire or of a country where the common law of England constitutes the basis of jurisprudence; or
- (2) Has satisfactorily completed the first year course of instruction in a law school accredited by the Committee or approved or provisionally approved by the American Bar Association at the time of the applicant's matriculation or at the time the applicant completes the first year of instruction and had completed at least two years of college work as defined in Section 1, Rule VII of these *Rules* prior to matriculating in such accredited or approved law school.

A general applicant shall be deemed to have satisfactorily completed the first-year course of instruction in an ABA approved or accredited law school when he or she is advanced to the second-year course of instruction at the same ABA approved or accredited law school, whether or not on probation.

#### **Exempt Applicants Who Are Unsuccessful on the Examination**

Rule VIII, Section 1(e) of the *Rules* states, in part:

... An exempt applicant who unsuccessfully takes the examination shall not be subject to any of the sanctions, requirements, or law study credit limitations which are otherwise imposed by this Rule on unsuccessful non-exempt applicants.

## Registration as a Law Student

Applications for the First-Year Law Students' Examination will not be accepted unless the applicant previously has registered with the Committee of Bar Examiners (Committee) as a law student in compliance with Section 6060(d) of the Business and Professions Code and Rule V of the *Rules*.

## **Applications**

Applications to take the First-Year Law Students' Examination are available online through the Admissions portion of the State Bar's website located at <a href="www.calbar.ca.gov">www.calbar.ca.gov</a>. Applications are available approximately one month prior to the timely filing deadline, which is published on the website.

# Grading

An applicant's multiple-choice score will be the number of items answered correctly. Multiple-choice raw scores will be converted to a 400-point scale. This process adjusts for the possible differences between administrations of the examination in the average difficulty of their multiple-choice items. As a result, an applicant's multiple-choice score will not be affected by the difficulty of the particular version of the examination that the applicant takes.

An applicant's raw score on an essay question can range between 40 and 100. Total raw essay scores can therefore range between 160 and 400 points. Total raw essay scores will be converted to the same 400-point scale of measurement as that used for the multiple-choice portion. This is done to adjust for the possible differences between administrations of the examination in the average difficulty of their essay questions and for variations in grader standards. Consequently, an applicant's adjusted essay score on the 400-point scale will not be affected by possible differences between administrations in the difficulty of the essay questions or by fluctuations in grader standards.

An applicant's total score on the examination is the sum of that applicant's converted scores on the multiple-choice and essay sections. This step gives these sections equal weight in determining the total score. Applicants need a total scaled score of 560 or higher to pass the examination.

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